



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/016,566	10/30/2001	Naoki Tagami	112857-300	6359
29175 7590 01/03/2007 BELL, BOYD & LLOYD, LLC P. O. BOX 1135 CHICAGO, IL 60690-1135			EXAMINER ROSWELL, MICHAEL	
			ART UNIT 2173	PAPER NUMBER

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/03/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/016,566

Applicant(s)

TAGAMI ET AL.

Examiner

Michael Roswell

Art Unit

2173

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,5 and 7-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-2, 5, and 7-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 2173

DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is in response to the Request for Continued Examination filed 12 October 2006.

Claim Objections

Claim 13 is objected to because of the following informalities: the claim includes improper punctuation in line 3 (a period after "spatial locations"). Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-2, 5, and 7-13 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Estrada et al (US Patent 6,732,148), hereinafter Estrada, and Hatlelid et al (US Patent 6,772,195), hereinafter Hatlelid.

Regarding claims 1 and 7-9, Estrada teaches storage means (the memory devices of col. 7, lines 55-64) for storing at least one list of users associated with the user space, wherein the list of users is generated by the first user and includes at least one second user denied admission to the user space and at least one second user granted admission to the user space (taught as the security of different virtual rooms through the use of access control lists [ACLs] that determine the level of access users

Art Unit: 2173

are allowed for the virtual space, at col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 25), wherein a list of predetermined spatial locations (the use of collaboration tools such as email, chat rooms, electronic whiteboards, or conferencing software, at col. 1, lines 52-60) in the virtual space is further stored, where the list of predetermined spatial locations is designated by the first user (taught as the creation of rooms and pages at col. 5, lines 50-65), placing means for placing the list of predetermined spatial locations stored in the storage means in a predetermined user space in the virtual space in response to an instruction from the first user (taught as the "place creation" method and database storage of col. 18, lines 14-22). Estrada further teaches determining means for determining, based on a request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in the storage means (taught as the security of different virtual rooms through the use of access control lists [ACLs] that determine the level of access users are allowed for the virtual space, at col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 25).

However, Estrada fails to explicitly teach notifying means for notifying the first user when a second user makes a request for admission to the user space occupied by the first user, determining means for determining, based on the request for admission, whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in the storage means, and control means for controlling admission of the second user to the user space based on a response from the first user, the response being based on the determination made by the determining means.

Hatlelid teaches a virtual world chat environment similar to that of Estrada. Furthermore, Hatlelid teaches notifying means for notifying the first user when a second user makes a request for admission to the user space occupied by the first user (taught

Art Unit: 2173

as the "ask permission" option by which a new user must prompt a room initiator for permission to join the chat, at col. 1, lines 1-18), and control means for controlling admission of the second user to the user space based on a response from the first user, the response being based on the determination made by the determining means (inherent in that a room initiator may accept or deny a request to join a chat).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Estrada and Hattlelid before him at the time the invention was made to modify the virtual space security of Estrada to include the notifying and control means of HATLELID. One would have been motivated to make such a combination, as one of the goals of Estrada is to provide increased security in a virtual space, at col. 32, lines 31-34 and lines 39-42.

Regarding claim 2, HATLELID inherently teaches notifying means being configured to provide at least one of a visual and audible notification to the first user, in that a room initiator may accept or deny a request to join a chat, and therefore the system must alert the user to the request in some fashion.

Regarding claim 5, Estrada teaches storage means for storing first entry information generated by the first user to allow other users to enter the user space (taught as the security of different virtual rooms through the use of access control lists [ACLs] that determine the level of access users are allowed for the virtual space, at col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 25), distributing means for distributing the first entry information stored in the storage means to the second user in response to an instruction from the first user (taught as the ability for a user to change the ACLs, at col. 16, lines 4-25), determining means for determining whether entry information used by the second

Art Unit: 2173

user to gain access to the user space matches the first entry information stored in the storage means when the second user uses the first entry information distributed by the distributing means to make a request for admission to the user space (taught as the ACLs and room security of col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 26), wherein when the determining means determines that the entry information used by the second user matches the first entry information stored in the storage means, the notification by the notifying means is terminated, and the control means permits the second user admission to the user space (taught inherently through the combination of Estrada and HATLELID, as a user given access rights in an ACL would inherently not need to ask permission to join a space, and therefore no notification would be necessary).

Regarding claim 10, Estrada teaches storing a list of users designated by the first user as those denied admission to a virtual space (taught as the security of different virtual rooms through the use of access control lists [ACLs] that determine the level of access users are allowed for the virtual space, at col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 25), determining whether the second user is on the list when the second user makes the request for admission to the virtual space (taught as the ACLs and room security of col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 26), and terminating notification and denying the second user admission to the virtual space when it is determined that the second user is on the list (taught inherently through the combination of Estrada and HATLELID, as a user denied access rights in an ACL would be denied access accordingly, and no notification would be necessary).

Art Unit: 2173

Regarding claim 11, Estrada teaches storing a list of users designated by the first user as those permitted admission to a virtual space (taught as the security of different virtual rooms through the use of access control lists [ACLs] that determine the level of access users are allowed for the virtual space, at col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 25), determining whether the second user is on the list when the second user makes the request for admission to the virtual space (taught as the ACLs and room security of col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 26), and terminating notification and permitting the second user admission to the virtual space when it is determined that the second user is on the list (taught inherently through the combination of Estrada and HATLELID, as a user given access rights in an ACL would inherently not need to ask permission to join a space, and therefore no notification would be necessary).

Regarding claim 12, Estrada teaches storing first entry information generated by the first user to allow other users to enter the user space (taught as the security of different virtual rooms through the use of access control lists [ACLs] that determine the level of access users are allowed for the virtual space, at col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 25), distributing the first entry information stored in the storage means to the second user in response to an instruction from the first user (taught as the ability for a user to change the ACLs, at col. 16, lines 4-25), determining whether entry information used by the second user to gain access to the virtual space matches the first entry information stored in the storage means when the second user uses the first entry information distributed by the distributing means to make a request for admission to the user space (taught as the ACLs and room security of col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 26), wherein when the determining means determines that the entry information used by the second user matches the first entry information stored in the storage means, the

Art Unit: 2173

notification by the notifying means is terminated, and the control means permits the second user admission to the user space (taught inherently through the combination of Estrada and HATLELID, as a user given access rights in an ACL would inherently not need to ask permission to join a space, and therefore no notification would be necessary).

Regarding claim 13, Estrada teaches storing a list of predetermined spatial locations in the virtual space, the spatial locations being designated by the first user, and placing the stored list in predetermined space in the virtual space in response to an instruction from the first user, taught as the security of different virtual rooms through the use of access control lists [ACLs] that determine the level of access users are allowed for the virtual space, at col. 15, line 54 through col. 16, line 25.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-2, 5, and 7-13 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Roswell whose telephone number is (571) 272-4055. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 - 6:00 M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kristine Kincaid can be reached on (571) 272-4063. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 2173

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Michael Roswell

12/21/2006


TADESSE HAILU

Patent Examiner